

**Inter-agency Food & Nutrition Policy Advisory Council Meeting
Minutes
(IFNPAC)**

DATE: October 20, 2015

TIME: 10:30 AM -12:00 PM

LOCATION: Conference 401, Rhode Island Department of Health

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Janet Coit, Director, Department of Environmental Management (DEM); Nicole Alexander Scott, MD, Director, Department of Health (RIDOH); Michael DiBiase, Director, Department of Administration (DOA); Aleatha Dickerson, Division of Elderly Affairs (DEA); Becky Bessette, RI Department of Education (RIDE)

ATTENDEES: Joe Masino, DEM; Rose Jones, DEM; Ken Payne, RI Food Policy Council; Leo Pollock, RI Food Policy Council; Allison Rogers, DOA; Ken Ayars, DEM; Chris Ausura, RIDOH; Georgina Sarpong, FFRI; Ellen Cynar, City of Providence; Courtney Bournes, Kendall Foundation; Eliza Lawson, RI DOH; Jan Shedd, RIDOH; Sumana Chintapalli, RI Food Policy Council; Dawn King, RI Food Policy Council/Brown University; Sheila Brush, RI Food Policy Council

1. Approval of May 28th, 2015 Meeting Minutes

- **Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott, Council Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:41 AM.**
- **Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott called for a motion to approve the May 28, 2015 meeting minutes.**
- **Director Coit motioned, and Director DiBiase seconded the motion.**

2. Public Comments Received

- **Dr. Alexander-Scott called for public comments; hearing none she moved to the next item on the agenda.**

3. RI Food Policy Council Presentation on Municipal Fact Sheets

- **Dr. Alexander-Scott called on Ken Payne to present on the most recent actions of the RI Food Policy Council (RI FPC).**

• **Ken Payne introduced himself, and the RI FPC membership in attendance Georgina Sarpong, Sumana Chintapalli, Dawn King, and Sheila Brush. He then provided a hand out of the RI Food Policy Council's priorities, available upon request; primary highlights of the handout were:**

1. Support of the State Food Plan: Support the IFNPAC and the RI Governor's Office in the development and implementation of a RI Food Plan.

2. Movement Building and Outreach and Communications: Increase public awareness and support for a local food system.

3. Rhode Island Local Data: Development and maintenance of Local Fact Sheets.

4. Local Agriculture and Seafood Act (LASA): Continue to assist RI DEM in the issuance and support of the LASA grant program.

- **Ken then called on Gerogina Sarpong and Dawn King to update on the actions of the RI Food Policy Council working groups.**

- **Georgina Sarpong provided an update on the priorities for the Access Working Group; which are to identify potential barriers to access within the community, and to expand “Bonus Bucks” type funding to more locations across the state to increase incentive availability for SNAP and WIC recipients.**

- **Dawn King provided an update on the current activities of the Data and Evaluation Work Group, which was that they are expanding the current approach to mapping the food system (businesses, utilization of local products, growth) to a more regional approach using the funding from the John Merk Fund.**

- **Ken then called on Sheila Brush to review the sample “RI Food Systems Snap Shot” –For copies of this document see: <http://rifoodeouncil.org/ri-food-system-snapshots/>. Sheila outlined the strategy for collection, and how these documents can be utilized to support the 50/60 Vision and the development and implementation of the RI food Plan.**

- **Director Coit asked if the IFNPAC and the RI Food Policy Council could work to issue a joint press release for this effort, and the Food Policy Council said they would work with staff at RI DEM and RIDOH to issue a press release in the coming weeks.**
- **Attendees and Council members discussed potential ways in which the data the Food Policy Council had developed could be utilized, and influence the policy decisions in state and local government. To date no plan for dissemination or utilization had been developed, but the information was public and attendees were encouraged to explore the information and share with their partners.**
- **Dr. Alexander-Scott asked how this information can be utilized to create actionable strategies to support the growth of access and utilization. Director Coit, answered that this would be a good place to bring the information from the “Snap Shots” into the State Food Plan discussion to help to inform that process.**

4. State Food Plan Discussion

- **Dr. Alexander-Scott called on Janet Coit to provide an update on the current and future plans in the state for a Food Plan.**
- **Director Coit provided an outline of the goals of the Governor’s office to support the growth of the local food sector and increase**

consumption of local food to support the growth of the State's economy. The Governor's Office is looking to the IFNPAC to be the body that helps to develop and inform the timeline and goals of the State Food Plan, but at this time there are not specifics available. Director Coit thanked the Kendall Foundation for their support of the State in the development of the food plan.

- Dr. Alexander-Scott thanked Director Coit and echoed her remarks regarding the support and called for any additional remarks or thoughts from the Council members.

- Director DiBiase stated that although the goal of the Food Plan is to develop a better food system, it is important to keep in mind that the Governor's priorities are very much in line with the development of a better economy and questioned the viability of vast economic growth in this sector.

- Director Coit responded that there is overall benefit for tourism with better quality and availability of local products as well as the impact of high quality food on the retention of "millennials" and STEM based talent as this is a priority for this demographic. Ken Payne then followed this comment with additional information on the research that supports the point that retention of talent is tied to multiple quality of life factors of the region, and access to food was one of the core factors in the determination of quality of life to millennials.

- Chris Ausura added that beyond the factors related to the retention of skilled talent there has been additional research that highlighted the benefit of local investment on the re-circulation of dollars in the local economy. Additionally, the food system has impacts beyond the purchase and sale of food that are associated with costs of preventable diet related chronic disease.

5. Health Equity Zone Presentation

- Dr. Alexander-Scott called on Carol Hall Walker to present on the RI Department of Health's Health Equity Zone project.
- Carol Hall Walker provided the Council membership and attendees with a handout, available upon request, and presented on the HEZ framework. The RIDOH is investing approximately \$2.7 million per year to support 11 lead organizations across the state to assess, plan and implement place-based strategies to improve population health outcomes. These projects are designed to engage the community, and to identify the social and environmental barriers to health and health equity. The RIDOH is coordinating the funding for these projects across multiple state and federal funding sources, and is working in collaboration with other organizations to explore the opportunity to leverage additional resources to support this initiative, and move towards a goal of health equity.

- **Dr. Alexander-Scott added that this project is the realization of a ten year process that was designed to move funding from silos separated out by health condition, to a place based investment that targets the investment into the community to address gaps, and increase capacity. Many of these zones/communities have chosen access to healthy and affordable food as a core area of need.**
- **Dr. Alexander-Scott called for questions on the presentation before moving on.**
- **Director Coit asked that DEM be engaged to help support the successful implementation of the projects.**
- **Dr. Alexander-Scott then called on Chris Ausura to briefly present on the food related work that the Health Equity Zones have taken on to date.**
- **Chris Ausura distributed the list of priorities within the HEZ that are related to food or nutrition interventions, available upon request. He then explained how the IFNPAC and the RI Food Policy Council, can collaborate with the HEZ by leveraging resources and establishing shared goals and visions.**
- **Diretor DiBiase asked for some level of clarification on the way that the “Bonus Bucks” program that many of the HEZ are implementing actually works.**

- Georgina Sarpong explained how Farm Fresh RI implements the program to provide a \$2 match for every \$5 spent using SNAP benefits at farmers markets to incentivize the purchase of local fruits and vegetables.
- Chris Ausura described the way that the USDA provides funding through the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive grant funding, and that there was another request for applications from USDA targeted at leveraging SNAP to increase the utilization of local food by SNAP recipients, and re-direct dollars spent by federal food benefit recipients into the local economy; but applications were due December 16th.
- Directors DiBiase and Alexander-Scott both stated that there was an impetus for the State to explore the possibility of applying for these funds, and asked that staff look into how this process may work.
- Carol Hall Walker and Georgina Sarpong added comments on need to address the cultural appropriateness of the foods, and community knowledge of markets that do exist as part of consumer education.

6. Adjournment

- Hearing no additional comments Dr. Alexander-Scott thanked the Council for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 12:04 PM